

Testimony
Submitted to the Education Committee
March 7, 2011

H.B. No. 6502 'AN ACT CONCERNING THE OPEN CHOICE PROGRAM'

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Currently I serve on the Board of Education in Bolton, CT and have represented my Board on the CREC Council for the ten years of my tenure. Our experience of the Open Choice Program in Bolton has been a positive one. We reached a level through our long involvement where participants in the program are above three percent of our student population. This is due to the ongoing voluntary acceptance and support for our students. We would like very much to continue this relationship.

In this regard I would like to support the Open Choice funding in the Governor's proposed education recommendations, Sec. 12, subsection (g) of section 10-266aa of the general statutes.

I also support the State Department of Education's proposed tiered funding formula based upon participation in the Open Choice program:

- \$3,000 per student for districts allocating 1% or more of their total enrollment to Open Choice students;
- \$4,000 per student for districts allocating 2% or more; and
- \$6,000 per student for districts allocating 3% or more.

The money that would come to the district is still less than our per pupil cost, but would certainly, in these difficult economic times, enable us to continue to participate in this program. We acknowledge that these are our students and they are part of our commitment to participation in the capital region education community.

At this time I am not in favor of diverting money to the Crandall School initiative but would rather see this money provide additional support for increased participation in the Open Choice program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Vice Chair Bolton Board of Education
Vice Chair CREC Council